




KULA MANU



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KULA MANU

2002

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY HAWAII

KULA MANU

2002

cover photo, "Licking Rose" by Nathan Petty

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*If you knew what I know about the power of giving, you
would not let a single meal pass without sharing it in
some way. -BUDDHA*

Thank you to everyone who has given of themselves by contributing
writing, art, and editing to this year's Kula Manu.

KULA MANU 2002

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SURRENDER

Bonita Toilolo

They told me to rite
but after, they say what I rite is bad
there are no problems in baradise
or any korupshen on our great land.

They told me to try again
so I really try a little harder
but when I finish
they say they going tell my fadder.

They didn't tell him,
only asked me to draw instead.
Looking at my drawing
they say somefing wrong wif my head.

They show special attention to me
becuss I might do somefing wrong.
They tell me happy storys
and teach me nice love song.

Every single day they ask
"Who are you?" to me,
and every day they want me happy to say
"A good Samoan girl" repeatedly.

They tell me I'm lucky
becuss my culture make me somebuddy.
Wif no culture, they say,
you are naked and a big nobuddy.

They want me to be proud
becuss only a few Samoans in the world.
I answer to make them happy
“Okay, I become good Samoan girl.”

THE HABIT

Anne Marie Chase

nails edged with certitude truant
callow hands smudge the veneer
a gnawing betrayal
the poker face futile
her bluff's been called
her hands displayed
a pitiful pair
not able to grasp
the discard of growth
with each snagging tear
and consequent spat

consequence spat

ejection
rejection
despite
 or in spite

volition may hide
in her unconscious habit
maturity's mauve
foregone
for a heedless hue
hesitant to consign
to constant composure



RAKU

Sean Hornof

CHICKEN KILLING

Jacob Jackson

Way out on la Meza Colorada in Zapopan, Jalisco, metropolitan Guadalajara, everything is yellow and brown, only roosters and water vendors sing, and I'm helping my friend Martin build a house that's been in progress for a couple years. We fold craters of white, dry mix into the water-filled center, and then lay handmade bricks along a square trench cut into the dirt. Martin's polio shrunk left leg looks like it's about to break every time he puts a little weight on it, and he's half a meter shorter than me, but he's working me under the table. Sweating hard and swinging my tree brand-handled-shovel, my soft, white hands blister, break, and burn. Heat expands from the throbbing tequila sun through ice white sky and punishes my *guero* skin for its naked audacity. Tender and foreign in a town where a man killed his wife's baby *a mordidas* two nights ago, and where Hector, the biggest Mexican I know, said he won't go even if you pay him. Brick box houses crawl out over the plain till they hit the cliff's edge at La Barranca, and black streams trickle and stink their way through trash-lined ditches that may conceal more than rotting cats and dogs.

I was sure that the expanse of boxes was the world's largest chicken farm when I was floating in on an air-conditioned jet with my forehead pressed against the oval window. There were too many of them, and they were too uniformly shaped to be houses. I guessed that they probably ate a lot of chicken in Guadalajara. Spanish to English book said it was called *pollo*. "*Me gusta pollo*," I whispered into the plastic reflection of my face which sat in the window like a ghost looking back at me from the chicken fields.

Martin's neighbors are selling fresh chicken today (Mexican fresh: you choose the one you like from the wire cage). A little before lunch time, women and children come to the front door with bags and baskets and a man goes out the back door with his *choriso* fingers wrapped

tight around the chicken's neck. Outside its familiar cage, the clucking-pecking-pen-chicken becomes a flailing-ball-of-feathers-and-feet-chicken in the spaghetti western sun sky. Using a thick brown string, the man with the red-stained shirt yanks the tethered head through a yellow funnel and positions the blood bucket to catch what it can. Scratching and kicking at the sky, the chicken's legs run faster than any chicken could have thought chickenly possible while the blood-man cuts for a minute straight with a jagged piece of metal that may or may not have been sharpened first: funnel jerking side to side. Feathers fly and the bucket gets full till the women stop coming and the children go for tortillas.

After my hands won't open or close completely without considerable effort and my neck, nose and arms are stop sign red, we go to *la casa de la familia Madera* for lunch. We eat *caldo de pollo* and hot blood sausage with warm, dusty white corn tortillas. Thoughtfully, *señora Madera* doesn't put one of the sallow little claw-feet into my bowl. A little voice with a stiff Mexican accent whispers, "Who's the chicken now, *pinche guero?*" inside my head as I pass on the chili peppers.

guero: light colored (usually to describe skin color)

a mordidas: with bites

Me gusta pollo.: I like chicken.

La casa de la familia Madera: The Madera's family's house

caldo de pollo: chicken soup

pinche: curse word more or less the equivalent of damn



SECOND HAND DANCE

Jake Ford

FOOTNOTES

Randal Allred

I confess that I love a footnote.
A literary voyeur am I,
Cat-footing around the structure
Of the text to peer in the back windows.
The oddments, scraps, and roads
Not taken in the writer's mind
Are what intrigue me.
 Why the note?
 Why not put it in the narrative?
I follow the secret passage
Into the back alleys.

THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

Kaitlin Palmer

She remembered the first time they surfed together. The winds blew onshore, and so even a mile from the beach, she could taste the salty, fishy, air. She loved the smell because she knew it. He had been surfing for a couple years, but today was her first time. The sun was fickle, and the cold water enveloped her and wouldn't let go. The wind made the waves splashy and sloppy, and luckily, the salty water hid her sweaty palms. He took her out where the water was too deep for either of them to touch the bottom and she caught her first wave. She popped up on her board like popcorn in an oily pan.

"You're a natural, Lucy," he said.

"I know," she said. She felt confident but still liked him to tell her she was good. She knew he was flirting, and she flirted back.

"No, I'm serious, I've never seen anyone this good on their first try."

"I'm amazing, aren't I," she said through a laugh.

That was six months ago and since then they had surfed a few times a week. She was getting pretty good, but he was still better. On Sunday, they had lots of time to talk about surfing because all they did on Sundays was talk. They talked on the phone because their parents liked them to be home with the family. They didn't surf on Sunday; they knew God was testing them to make sure they were committed to the gospel. Parley was going on his mission soon, and they wanted to be focused.

During school on Monday, the sky had been light blue with only one shining white cloud in the whole sky and was as beautiful as a Sunday. As soon as the bell rang after school, the stinging rain fell in microscopic needles. They didn't care about the rain because they had waited through eight grueling hours of monotone teachers and brown, sweaty plastic chairs. Lucy enjoyed the gray sky, and Parley insisted

that he actually preferred the drizzle. The winter swells usually tapered off, so today's lull came unexpectedly. They long-boarded. Lucy rode the nine-footer with three fins, and Parley rode the single-finned nine-six.

Their boards fit perfectly inside of and on top of each other, and they laid them in the bed of the truck. She struggled to carry her board from the parking lot to the sand. The wind wanted to rip it from her arms. With cautious triumph, she stepped onto the wet sand only to find Parley already waxing his board. He waxed his board with no pattern, but his artificial coconut wax job still worked. She always waxed her board in a circular pattern and admired him for being disorganized. She was enamored, and to show him, she rubbed his shoulders. She traced the four white scars running down his back with her fingertip. She called them his reef bite. He had had a surfing accident before. He had gone out so far and the waves were too big. He got sucked over the falls and dragged across the reef. He never went to the emergency room to get it checked out because he didn't want to have to stay out of the water with stitches. His cuts healed messy and the scars were jagged. She thought they were manly, but he was an idiot for letting them get infected. Reef cuts always get infected; he should have known that.

"Do you think we should go out, Parley?"

"Of course. Look at the waves. This is probably one of the last post winter swells we'll have."

"Look at how dark the sky is getting, and it's drizzling."

"We'll just stay on the inside where it's smaller, and it will be fun."

"Fine."

Either she remembered having this conversation before or this was the conversation she imagined him having before he went out the time he got his scars. He wasn't going to go out too far again; he was smarter than that. She trusted him, and if he said they would be all right on the inside, she believed him.

She balanced on one leg like the coral pink flamingos at the zoo and lifted the other to strap her stiff Velcro identification tag/ leash around her ankle so that she wouldn't lose her board. He sat down. She carried her board on top of her head like a ceramic gourd full of

water, and he dragged his behind him in the sand so he could draw a trail. She ran and skimmed the water on her belly before she even felt the water. He stepped in one toe at a time. She caught the first wave of the day. The water looked light blue and gray. More gray because the sun wasn't out. The water wasn't cold, but sitting on their boards, they shivered in the wind. In the wind, the ironwood needles first suspended vertically and then hung limp. The water bumped into itself, and white peaks formed everywhere. The heavy onshore winds brought the blue bubbles, which Lucy hated. Once she lost her board and on the way in, she got tangled in blue jellyfish tentacles. On shore, her glands pounded in her armpits and the bends of her hips. Her skin felt like it was filled with little men with torches stabbing her. She lay alone until Parley came in to carry her home. Blue bubbles didn't really bother Parley.

Parley saw his wave early. "This is mine," he yelled and chased it. He positioned himself so that in three deep, fluid arm strokes, his hips rose and he stood. She loved watching his grace. He moved like he was made for water. He moved with slow motion fluidity. His triceps hardened. He lifted his body to squatting, then opened up down the face of the wave. He could go from the back of the board to the front in four memorized steps, and then step one foot behind the other in time with his pulse. He floated against the backdrop of the clouds.

Lucy seemed more naturally fluid than Parley. She had acquired extra grace as a gymnast. She lifted herself from lying to standing, grinning the whole time. She traversed the wave from top to bottom in a carved, rhythmic pattern lasting as long as the wave. She always did at least one headstand. She picked a big wave, caught it and instead of standing on her feet, planted her hands on the sides of the board, and (toes pointed and painted) held her stiff body straight up. When other surfers stopped paddling and sat up to watch her, Parley smiled like he was proud.

They had even more fun catching the same wave. He looked like her shadow, as their arms moved the water simultaneously and their rising hips looked like one person. She would jump onto his board mid-wave and they would ride together. Their individual grace complemented and enhanced each other's. She could step onto his board and immediately her balance enclosed his.

Dusk fell prematurely because of the rain. Parley wanted to go out further.

"Wanna go all the way out for a couple waves?" he asked. His pleading half-smile let her know he expected to get rejected.

"Shoots, let's go," she said.

She regretted her enthusiasm when, on the paddle out, she collided with a blue bubble. As she looked down to unwrap the skin-dissolving tentacle, Parley came rushing full speed toward her. In the darkness, he did not notice her until too late. He tried to pull his board back, but the lip of the wave yanked his board in her direction, and knocked her head. The wave picked her and Parley up and they tumbled together through deep, aerated froth. She was stuck in the foam of a freshly poured root beer float and her doggy paddling was getting her nowhere. When they surfaced and blew the water and snot out of their noses, they didn't even want to look at each other.

"What happened?" she asked after a long silence.

He wouldn't answer.

"Let's get out of the water before you attract sharks," she said noticing the blood dripping down his back and trying to lighten things up.

He didn't say anything but started paddling in.

She had never had a concussion before, but she guessed she probably had one now. Her brain was a sponge filling with water, trying to escape through her eyes. She stumbled to shore and crawled to where she could lie down out of the reach of the water's incessant, grabbing fingers. She was tired. She had double vision and her head hurt. She was relieved she wasn't bleeding, but when she saw Parley's bright white cotton t-shirt pressed to the back of his head, she could imagine blood streams crawling down his shoulder blades.

"How many fingers am I holding up?" he asked.

"Six," she said with a giggle. There were really only three.

"What do you think we should do?" he asked scowling.

"I don't know. I think I have a minor concussion. Let me see your head."

"What does it look like?"

"I think it's a skeg mark, but I can't tell how deep."

"Do you think I need stitches?"

She shrugged.

"I am such a moron. I can't believe I ran into you. I'm so sorry. This sucks, I don't want to get stitches because I won't be able to get back in the water, and I probably gave you a concussion. Why am I such an idiot?"

"What do you wanna do? Should we go to the emergency room?"

"I want to go home and super glue my stupid head shut."

He knew that it was better to take care of things the right way, having been infected before, because an infection only makes the pain worse. He needed his head to heal right so it wouldn't cause any problems on his mission. Even though he wanted to be able to keep surfing, he knew that if he didn't go to the hospital, he'd probably end up needing antibiotics later.

She didn't want him to go in because they wouldn't be able to surf together, but she could tell he needed stitches. They sat on the beach in the dark gray shadows of dusk. She concentrated on staying awake and counting the salty drops that rolled slowly down his cheeks. She knew that if he got stitches he wouldn't be able to get back in the water until after his mission. Eventually, in silence, he carried her to the truck while she held his shirt to his head.

I AM BEAUTIFUL

Bowman Brown

I am beautiful
Not really beautiful but trying like a sullen Butterfly
and chasing the tides and the
Sound and the truth close to anything of farther away but never
Listening or
Oblivious to truth bitten cold by death and
Living the birth of Death frowning on the endless seconds when you
actually live rather than cry
or die or listen to the horrible scream of time ticking past and
releasing
A grasp too
Tight for breath and choking a breath and
A moment out of some second of time,
Doors into beautiful
Doors into chaos and
nothing and into what is known and unknown and desired.
Desire hums and melts like good blood and sweat and wasted time.
Doors into that part of truth that hides
in the part of the day where shadows are long like knives
That impose and prick fingers of guilt and
Pain that makes me look beautiful



DRAWING: INK ON SILK

Won Hye Chong

PING-PONG EPIPHANY

Jesse Palmer

I sing
playing ping pong
on the sixth floor.
Viscous light
spills in from somewhere
outside, although the sky
overflows with jostling clouds
and sidewalks are wet with drying rain.
Songs of Zion
slipping, weary notes of joy,
that finding themselves, hover
and splash deep
into the somehow sunlight
of my somewhere soul,
with the ball
ricochets,
across the even green table
click, clock
of seconds multiplying
into eternities.
Years are streaked on the windows.
In the clarity after rain, I am
happy with the steady, rhythmic
return of now.

AN ACT OF HONOR

Jennifer Sum

A family of four—father, mother, daughter, and son—reside in small but suitable room buried in the heart of a Japanese city. Year? 1945. Their home consists of a central room where the family eats, listens to the radio, talks about school, the job, the home, the relatives, and life in general. Rigid shelves line the central room like orderly soldiers, each filled with prized heirlooms, soft Oriental paintings, musty Japanese books of the legends, history, and geography of Japan. Distinctly prominent is a tarnished trophy of some sort, highlighted by a proud red ribbon which has earned a shelf of its own. A tiny radio occupies the top of a red oak chest. The scent of cooked rice and faint wafts of burning Buddhist incense saturate the room. At the center of it all is the dinner table surrounded by straw tatamis on which all kneel to eat dinner, the most important meeting of the day.

"I'm home" the daughter calls out.

The father, meditating by the table, gestures to his daughter,

"Come sit."

She obeys.

It is ten thirty. The air is humid and sticky, a warm August morning. The family assembles to the central table. What once supported a vast array of mouth-watering meals, now upholds meager portions of miso soup, seaweed, rice, and steamed fish. A delicate hand pours green tea into miniature cups from a porcelain teapot. The owner of the hand is the stiff well-bred mother, clothed in a cream silk kimono. Educated, a daughter of an honorable family, she upholds a head of opinions, but knows well the "ways." She is hushed to a silence that conveys dignity and manner. A tender woman, calm and serene, she says little, thinks much. She carefully places a cup of tea in front of each family member who then gives a slight bow in gesture to say "thank you." The officiator of the home, Honorable Father, is quite

anxious this morning.

"Has he written yet?"

"I received his letter this morning."

Silence.

"We will read it together then."

The daughter attentively listens, her eyes wide and alert. She is perched on her *tatami*, ready to pounce. Dressed in a plain taupe *yukata*, she attends the national high school, which makes her parents proud. She has fine long hair, a pale face, and small but defiant features; like her mother, she carries a strong head. She takes a sip of her tea.

"Could we not open it?" the daughter intervenes.

The father squints at his daughter, reading a foreign language. He tears the letter open anyway. The mother looks down at her hands. Handing the crumpled piece of paper to his wife, he crosses his legs on the *tatami* and drinks his tea.

The mother gazes at the letter. Her voice quivers as she reads.

"My dearest family, I have received my mission. No words can describe the desires of my heart. The killing of my people has gone on long enough. The only thing that burns in me is the duty that I owe to my country, the honor that this mission calls for. I wouldn't choose otherwise. I only hope that it will make you proud. I consider myself lucky. The other *kamikazes* live to about twenty years. I'm twenty-three. I have had three more years than they have had. The general says that we are giving the ultimate sacrifice, one that will bring great honor to you and Japan."

At this moment, the mother's worn hands grasp the edges of the paper, making a fist in silent agony.

"What day?" The father asks.

"Two weeks." The mother responds, staring blankly at the words.

Pause.

"Tell him not to go...," the daughter whispers.

"What?" the father swings his head in her direction.

"Tell him to come home."

"He has a duty to the country."

"We need him more than they do."

The mother carefully folds the letter and places it gently into the brown envelope.

"He needs to stop. They all need to stop," the daughter continues in a bitter whisper. The family, sitting in a circle is quiet for a few seconds.

"An honorable man will fight for his country and family at all costs. It is his duty. This is what I believe." The father glances up at the tarnished trophy on the shelf.

"He is my brother and your son!" She turns to plead with her mother,

"Okaasan! Write to him, tell him you're sick...something."

Her mother does not raise her head or move at all. For a moment, the father winces at the sight of his motionless wife. He continues,

"Your brother has made his decision. That is it. You will hold your mouth now..."

A still hush falls on the room and this family. Time seems to stop. A plane drones overhead. The bomb drops. All is lost.

O

Jason Barrett

Stranded high

falling

flying

Careening cosmos
in the cobalt house of vertigo

Trudging
hurling inferno traveler

Wandering
steady rolling wheel watching

Millstone walking
warming life and brittle death waiting chill

Running
water bathing azure footprints dry

Whipping
cool wind on that warm face

Corkscrew carving
sandwich sky

Does the sun cry as it daily dies



MOONLIGHT ASPENS

Elizabeth Nowland

ELECTIVE SURGERY

Erin Packham

Operating room nine is reserved for female patients. Hysterectomies are performed in there. Nobody likes to clean nine when the surgery is over because pus and blood dapple the tables, surgical lights and floor. I'm still confused as to how an operation that is performed in the center of a room can fling bodily excretions onto the walls. I don't mind cleaning room nine so much, but Matt, one of the other orderlies, doesn't go near it. Once he had to empty one of the yellow-pus-filled containers into the flusher. Some of the thick, mucousy substance spilled onto his scrubs, and he contributed to the mess by throwing up. Our supervisor told him he didn't have to empty those buckets anymore.

Alan is a roly-poly guy. He's involved with pre-med, which is why he works in the hospital. The two of us work room nine together. We take turns picking up patients for the cases. Ushering someone to surgery isn't complicated, but it's irritating. I don't like associating with patients while they are awake. I don't like smiling and acting interested in nonsense. Everything's much easier once the case is under way. The patient loses her identity once the anesthesia sets in; she morphs into an inanimate object as soon as the upper eyelids lock with the lower. If my job title didn't require me to pick up the patients, I wouldn't. Mopping up blood that peppers the floor is more appealing to me. At least I can listen to the radio blare over the OR loudspeaker while I dance with my mop.

It's my turn to pick up the next case: Judy Barlow. She's waiting in Short Stay at the other side of the hospital. I have to locate a nurse before I take the patient to surgery. I find Shauna and tell her the OR is ready.

"Super! I just have to turn on the antibiotic."

Shauna is one of those overly optimistic nurses with a cheery, high-pitched voice and orange hair. I follow her as she waddles into W326.

At the head of the bed, I.V. bags sag from a pole. Shauna looks at the 47-year-old woman sprawled on the bed in her blue patient gown. I find Judy's medical chart on the table next to the bed. The papers inside mean nothing to me as an orderly; I'm just the transport service.

"Judy, this is Erin. She's going to walk you down to surgery today."

I ask Judy if she's ready to go. She looks pale but smiles as she sighs, "I guess so. My husband just went to move the..." A tall, overweight man with a jet-black, handlebar mustache saunters into the room. His ugly gray jeans are too small; and he's unsuccessfully endeavored to tuck in his shirt over his outrageous gut.

Raising his voice to an unnecessary volume he belts out in a country accent, "Hey wait just a minute there, darlin'! Are you tryin' to steal my wife?" He snorts, apparently amused at his ability to act like an ass. I've perfected the courtesy laugh.

I take the droopy I.V. bags off the pole and hold them above Judy's heart. If the bags are below the heart, blood leaks out where the antibiotic is supposed to go in. People hate to see their blood draining into the tube, and it's no use telling them the backwash is harmless. They still freak out. I'm better off letting my arm get tired as we walk the quarter mile to surgery.

Halfway down the hall I show mustache-man the Family Waiting Room. Once he's oriented himself so he'll be able to return, we continue to the holding area outside the OR. I position Judy onto a gurney and cover her with a heated blanket. When she's settled, I guide the gurney from Holding and turn toward the closed double doors of "SURGERY."

I look at mustache-man, "This is where you say good bye." Judy tears up, and mustache-man grips her hand and tells her everything is going to be okay. I think to myself: it's not heart surgery or a brain trauma.

I push the huge button on the wall, and the surgery doors swing open. Straight down the small hallway, first door on the left is "OR 9."

I park the stretcher on the opposite wall.

"All righty Judy. I'll tell the nurses you're here and your anesthesiologist will be out to talk to you shortly. Can I get you anything else?"

"No."

"You're just going to have a nice nap. We'll see you when you wake up."

Judy buries her adult head into the heated blanket while I think, it's not that big a deal—you come out three to six pounds lighter than you do when you go in.

Dr. Hopson, the anesthesiologist, is a tall 40-year-old man with blond hair, gray eyes and a hawk nose. His reputation among the orderly community is "don't mess." Don't mess with him and don't mess up. He's intimidating, but all first-rate doctors are. Hopson puts Judy to sleep so quickly I hardly notice Alan and I are up at bat. Everyone can relax now because the patient is no longer Judy—now it's a body.

Dr. Hopson helps Alan and me move the body from the stretcher to the two-foot-wide operating table. Hopson holds the head because he has to monitor the tubes wedged in the esophagus. I guide the feet as Alan tugs on a towel that is cradling the buttocks. Stripped from its gown, the naked figure rests on the sterilized plank looking awkward and stiff. It's lucky it's slimmer than its husband. Fat bodies get the same narrow tables as the rest of the patients. We have to push and shove those rolls of flab into equilibrium. We let the excess body drip over the edges, and the surgeons lean against the flab because it provides a comfortable cushion of support as they dig through human guts. I'm never surprised when patients complain about back pain or bruises not near the locale of the operation.

After watching hundreds of surgeries, I still get nauseated when the nurse installs a catheter. The device sucks urine from the inside of the bladder and stores it in a plastic purse attached to the patient. This prevents the fluid from trickling out, unwanted, during and after surgery. It won't take long for the bag to fill up with dark yellow juice.

A doctor arranges sterilized sheets over every part of the body except the abdominal area. The head surgeon, Dr. Rasmussen, makes his first incision on the left side of the lower abdomen. Rasmussen easily slices a six-inch line of blood.

The stomach tears open beautifully. In a single motion the body's protective peel splits apart precisely as the knife dictates. When the air invades the coiled clusters of fat in the fleshy tissue, the fat melts into oil. One of the nurses thrusts a tube into the future scar, and blood whirls into the plastic vessel. Eventually the river of blood splatters as it enters into a clear bucket posted on the wall. Another synthetic pipe carries the yellowish-brown goop into a different bucket. The smell is unbearable. It smells like decaying bowels. If the smell were any stronger I would gag. I pull my surgical mask over my nose and mouth. The smell of death is replaced with the sweet smell of my spearmint gum; the fresh mint flavor floats from my mouth into my nostrils, making my eyes water.

Rasmussen burrows into the body. He puts rags in and takes them out when they are drenched crimson. The blood-logged cloths are pitched onto a mat, lying on the floor. For some reason each rag is lined up—not allowed to touch another saturated module. I don't know why the doctors do this, but I'm sure I'll be the one to throw them in the Soiled Send.

Rasmussen extracts all he can of the body's rotten innards. Ovaries that once helped produce a life are buried at the bottom of a red "Biohazard" trash bag. Additional putrefied pieces of the female reproductive system decorate the floor around the targeted container. Whatever gory substance misses the sack the first time is picked up by either Alan or myself. I nominate him to do it since I had to pick up the patient.

Rasmussen pulls the two pieces of abdomen together with his stained gloves. They don't seem to fit together properly. He staples the wound closed and wipes the surface clean. When he's finished, Hopson brings Judy back to life. Her lips are still hugging a mouthful of cylinders.

Judy's eyes are open, but I wouldn't call her awake. She won't remember the next couple of hours even though she seems conscious. Hopson, Alan and I assume our positions and after a quick tug, Judy is on a bed. Hopson rolls her out of the room as he squeezes a black bag that furnishes Judy with oxygen.

Surveying the damage of the once clean operating room, Alan and I go to work. In no time, the reeking puddles of Judy's bodily dis-

charge vanish, and Alan fetches the next case.

* * *

I scan the pages of my textbook with a pink highlighter. I shouldn't do homework on my bed—it makes me sleepy. Nevertheless, I rest on my stomach, pillow under my chest, homework spread in front of me. It's freaking hot in here.

The phone rings and echoes in the kitchen. Mary Ellen will get it.

"Erin? It's for you."

There's nothing like a phone call to get the blood flowing. This is just what I need to keep me awake for another half hour. I flip over on my side and swing my legs over the edge of my bed. I wiggle my slippers on and prance out of my room and into the kitchen to retrieve the phone.

"Hi mom!"

I'm thrilled with the unexpected call from home. I can count on one hand the number of times my family has initiated the phone call. I wondered if they even had my number.

"Well, I'm calling because I just got back from an appointment with Rasmussen."

Mom's inflection sounds funny; her statement sounds more like a question. I figure she is just calling to tell me she had a nice chat with Rasmussen, since I know him. Then I remember mom's endless battle with her monthly period. Actually, it's more like her tri-monthly period. I decide that's why she had an appointment with him. Still curious, I prod her to tell me what's up.

"He told me it's gotta go. My surgery is scheduled for next month."

My heart plummets into my stomach, ready to be digested.



MOTHER AND CHILD

Monique Saenz

IN THE QIN LING MOUNTAINS

Jesse Palmer

Through the narrow valley,
between the mountains and mist
we push our way up.
Goats call after us.
Crystal streams ring.
We reach the house where a minor god lives
tending radishes,
 sprouting round and white above the black soil,
and gathering sticks,
 intertwined wood for winter.
Steamed bread is heaped on the table
complete brown
misshapen orbs.
We converse
 of black bears stealing fruit,
 and deep, soft white winters.
Ages sit together
on the hard dirt floor—
the foundation.
Pungent clouds of cigarette smoke
 incense offered by Xu Ming—
 the rising light—
drape over the rocky shoulders,
rough arms,
clear sky forehead,
wet hands, rocky feet path.
Obscure mysteries,
he sees, eyes like stars.
Mountain, mist,
smoke, steam, sky,
river running.



**XIAO QIAN: PORTRAIT OF A
CHINESE GHOST STORY**

William Loke

ON POLYNESIAN GARDENING

Eric Shumway

When we moved into our new home on Naniloa Loop in Laie, Hawaii, I was anxious to make our backyard into a large Polynesian garden with sweet potatoes, taro, bananas, passion fruit, pele, and tapioca. Securing sweet potato cuttings from a Tongan friend, I planted the leafy stems in twenty-five separate mounds, as I had seen my Polynesian friends do. I watered and waited faithfully for several weeks. The result was a prodigiously lush canopy of sweet potato plants that filled the spaces between the mounds.

The leaves were so prolific and luxuriant; my sweet potato patch caught everyone's attention. Word went through the village that Shumway, the *palangi*, had the finest stand of sweet potatoes on the North Shore. Tongans and Samoans alike would stop by to gaze and praise. I loved the attention. It went to my head. Soon I was inviting people to come and see my patch of sweet potatoes. With every Tongan I encountered in a conversation I would somehow turn our discussion to my sweet potato patch. Tongans especially were profuse in their compliments, "*Fielau ko Faivaola koe, lava me 'a 'i tahi, toe lava me 'a 'i 'uta he ma 'ui'ui ho'o ngoue.*" (Little wonder that your chief's title is *Faivaola*. You're both successful on the sea and on the land, such as the lushness of your garden plot.) I was so overjoyed by this praise, I thought about it a lot. My ears were attuned to any compliment that came my way.

I remember well the morning I walked out into the garden to harvest my first sweet potatoes. It was the right time, and I imagined a huge crop. In fact, I had promised a number of my Polynesian friends that I would be right over that day with their *inas*i, their own basket of sweet potatoes. I dug up the first mound. To my surprise there wasn't a single potato, only pitiful little roots dangling in my hand. I dug up the second mound, a third and a fourth—nothing. As I stood in

disbelief among all that lush leafy cover, I could feel the burning sensation of shame and embarrassment in my face. Slowly it dawned on me that I had the most beautiful and the most worthless sweet potato patch on the North Shore. True I could eat the leaves, but there was no fruit below.

I'm not sure why I got no crop. Was it the fertilizer, the soil? Or was it Providence teaching me some resounding lesson? Don't count your sweet potatoes before the harvest. He who brags loudly (or softly) will be exposed accordingly. We are all too willing to cash in on a little praise whether there is justification for it or not. When we allow appearance to masquerade for the real thing we put everything at risk—integrity, identity, reputation, sometimes our very lives.



TREE

Joseph Marler

COSTA RICA (BIENVENIDA):

SEPTEMBER 22, 7:00P

Kaitlin Palmer

Solid gray, gilled masses thrash
violently. Twisting and twirling
they dance.

We wait until seven, so that
(even) with no sun, the sand
(warmly) envelopes sunken feet.

Silence sits like summer air,
stagnant, with dead winds on a
clean, washed (rain filmed) rock.

Amid the yellow and purple almost
healed, and olive green-blue (on
hip and eyebrow) fresh bruises

we ceremoniously stand
to celebrate the scratches and scabs
of agile activity and wrestle with

I do.

WOMAN WANTED

Debbie Frampton

Woman Wanted—Preferably a virgin. Must be willing to serve God, country and three square meals a day. Must be in good shape and able to pull own weight (but not too much weight). Silent type preferred, particularly during Sports Center and between the hours of 10pm - 6am. Honesty is a must, unless it goes against any social or cultural norms or hurts anyone's feelings, especially mine. Sincerity is a prerequisite, even if you have to fake it. Must have a sense of humor and be able to laugh at yourself and my jokes. Did I say preferably a virgin? Ability to act independently is desirable, unless otherwise indicated. Experience both filling and taking orders helpful. Would prefer busty blond, but am willing to work out alterations. Benefits negotiable according to productivity. Full time, plus overtime required. No vacation time. Wages not quite minimum. No experience necessary. Will train. Room, board and French maid uniform provided, and some flowers if absolutely necessary. Please send resume, photo and self addressed stamped envelope. And don't call me. I'll call you.



STERLING A.6

Geoff Shupe

RIPPLES

Marc Allred

My oldest brother Scott taught me how to spear fish. I always look at my reflection in the water while I spit into my diving mask and crumple up green leaves to keep it from fogging up. The ripples made by the Hawaiian ocean distort the white man's face that I see. I try to see myself clearly but the water won't hold still long enough to see all my features.

I moved to Hawaii in 1986. I was only six at the time and always got tickle torture from my sisters and rug burns from my brothers. I can still smell our new house. I was barefoot and felt the dusty rust carpet under my feet – bare foot because you take your shoes off before going into someone's house in Hawaii. A sticky breeze carried the smell of passion fruit from the lush emerald yard. Through the windows I could see the trees and bushes that lined my new home. The smell of passion fruit still reminds me of when I first came to Hawaii.

I was born in St. George, Utah, in 1980 and lived there until I was six years old. I have very few memories of Utah. A lot of them are jumbled together with games I played in a back yard with shriveled grape vines and strawberry patches in my dad's little garden. The strawberries are always green in my memories and always make me sick.

My family had always lived on the mainland and had no connection with Hawaii or Polynesians. They uprooted me from the mainland and transplanted me to Hawaii. Transplanting can be very difficult on some species. I learned that in my agriculture class at Kahuku High School.

I recall my first day at Hau'ula Elementary. My mom wore light colored clothes. Her white purse dangled from her shoulder when she left me misty eyed at the door of my new class. No one else was there

and her perfume lingered after she kissed me on the cheek. I sat down on my box of crayons and began to cry. The cardboard box cracked under me. I didn't know why I was crying.

"Marc's all red" was what the kids on the playground yelled at me through their rotting teeth and noses that dripped of "hannabuaddah." Hau'ula has one of the highest populations of full-blooded Hawaiians on O'ahu. At first, I wondered why I was the only kid with blonde hair. During lunch, I would look around the cafeteria and wonder if everyone's mom used the same rice bowl to cut their hair. I had to tell my mom to get the same kind of rice bowl. Why was I different? My name, Marc Allred, always made me an easy target for ridicule. It didn't help that I had red hair, too. God thinks he's funny.

In fourth grade at Hau'ula Elementary, the kids get to take a trip to an outer island and perform traditional Hawaiian songs and dances wearing silly lavalavas and sticky green ti-leaf leis. I've always been musically inclined and like to perform so I tried hard to learn how to sing and dance the Hawaiian way. The teachers thought I was good at it, so they thought it would be funny to put the white boy in the front of the group to shine. There is nothing more embarrassing than being a white guy in a group of dark skinned Polynesians with your shirt off. And then they put me in the front like an animal under a glass. I felt like everyone was examining my skin.

My mom says that the first few years I was at Hau'ula I would wear long sleeved t-shirts to school all the time so that the other kids wouldn't see the freckles on my arms. I don't remember that. I remember stuff like hiding from Napua, Kauai, or Misty who tried to beat me up. They were mean girls.

High school was different. I left Hawaii before I started serving my time at Kahuku. My family went to Jerusalem for a year and I returned to the day care center called Kahuku High. I still had my old friends from elementary though. I wasn't surprised at how many people remembered my name. Not just my first name, but my whole name. Hau'ula roughed me up, but I came out of there knowing the other kids and getting along with them. That helped me feel I was becoming more like those around me. We came from the same school, played the same games, liked the same music, talked the same way, ate the same foods; we just had different colored skin.

High school was better because there were more students, and thus more haoles – white people. I didn't have any problem feeling a part of the group while I was in Kahuku, but Matt Daley did. He had just moved into Hau'ula from Utah. His dad was working at BYU-H, the same place my dad worked. Matt was putting down roots in a new place. The poor guy hadn't paid his dues like I had in Hau'ula.

I was getting off the school bus one day. I was always the last one to get off because the bus driver treated me nice and went the extra distance to reach my house. I don't know why he treated me special. Matt got off at the same stop as me, but why were my friends from Hau'ula on the bus too? There were about eight of them with us. They asked me if Matt was my friend. I said, "Yeah, I know him." I noticed they were all sitting close to him and Matt looked sweaty and nervous. We all got off the bus. I crossed the street to my house and Matt started running. Through the exhaust of the noisy bus I saw my Hau'ula-ites running away from Matt's house.

Matt's nose was bent to one side with blood smeared across his lips. His glasses were broken and twisted into strange shapes that hung off his ears. His eyes were both blackish brown and beginning to puff. They had chased him to his door; and when he couldn't unlock it they all took turns cracking his face. Once he hit the floor, they kicked him until his father opened the door, since he could hear Matt yelping. I found Matt still on the floor, face in hands, blood dripping, his mother shrieking. Matt's brothers were looking around and wanted to know who had beaten him up.

An HPD officer showed up with his important blue shirt, shiny badge, and black gun. His accent and tone of voice reminded me of my friends from Hau'ula. My feelings towards HPD can't be expressed properly without using four letter words. The officer asked Matt's father if anyone had actually seen anyone pummel Matt. Matt's father couldn't believe what he was hearing. The officer dropped the information like a kick to the chest, "We can't do anything if no one saw it." I knew who did it, where they lived, and even where their grandmothers lived. I told Matt's brothers where to find the Hau'ulaites who had beaten their brother.

I was shaking when I saw my Hau'ulaites in their driveway with their shirts off, flashing tattoos of Hawaiian designs and names. I stut-

tered when I talked and told them they had beaten Matt up pretty bad.

"So what?"

"Dude," I said. "His parents are gonna tell the cops and take it to court. You guys shouldn't have done it. He's messed up pretty bad."

"Marc, go home. Just go home."

Nui was in the garage. He was the guy who had slapped me and dared me to hit him back in fifth grade while the janitor was watching. My teacher walked up to unlock the class and asked why I was crying. After hearing that Nui had hit me, she shrugged her saggy shoulders and let the rest of the Hau'ula-ites into the class while I cried out my red eyes. Nui was a punk. Amona was with him in the garage also. Amona came up to the car and Matt's brothers locked their doors and rolled up the windows as if they were at a stop light in Compton. We left. Nothing was done. Matt's nose healed but is forever crooked.

My family used to take trips to Utah in the summer. We'd stay in the dry and dusty basements of uncles or aunts whose names I didn't know. I didn't know anyone or have any friends there. We went to family reunions and sang songs I didn't recognize and they danced silly dances I didn't recognize. I met cousins who I didn't know, aunts who said they had changed my diapers, and uncles who said I had really red hair before but the sun must have changed it in Hawaii. A lot more than my hair changed I think. I hate going to Utah. I don't know anyone there and everyone there talks funny.

I'm twenty-one now and I've had time away from Hawaii. When I'm away from home, I get itchy for the sticky rice, salty drives home from the beach, hugs from huge women at church, and hikes to waterfalls. That's where I feel comfortable.

I used to date a haole girl. We went driving through the back roads of Hau'ula one night and I ran into some friends. She didn't understand the language I used with them. I was speaking a different dialect and had to translate for her. I had to use words that my Hau'ula-ites would understand. I switched languages once I got back into the car. I thought I only spoke two languages after living in Argentina. Looks like I speak "Hau'ula-ish" too.

Josh is an old friend of mine. I went through Hau'ula and Kahuku

school with Josh. We even got into a fight at Pounders beach once because I cut him off surfing. That got him mad so he ripped off my bead necklace and swatted me with his body board. The beads flew off my neck and slipped into the water while his water logged body board stung with each whack. Each thump surprised me. I thought he was just playing, but Josh looked mad and was hitting hard and he had ripped off my necklace and didn't say he was sorry. Didn't I go through Hau'ula with you, Josh? Didn't I earn your friendship?

I picked Josh up from Pounders yesterday. He has a full beard and is sponsored by Ballistic surfing now. I hadn't seen him for at least three or four years. When I pulled my rusted wagon of a car over the pine needles by the bus stop, he got off the rock wall, surfboard and fins in hand, and yelled my name before he even got close to the car. "Marc Allred! I'll never forget your name!" Josh threw his body board into the back of my car and it sputtered all the way to Punaluu. We swapped emails and talked about high school a bit. I tried to look through my rear view mirror to see if the body board Josh took out of my car had a head sized dent in it or not. It didn't.

I don't notice the smell of passion fruit in my house anymore, but when I come home from a long stay off the island, I can smell the tart fruit for a few days. It reminds me of days spent in Hau'ula with broken noses, sandy bed sheets, salty winds, sticky rice, and hugs from huge women at church. Sometimes I wonder if I'm supposed to be the kid from Utah and I try to get to know my uncles who knew me when my hair was red, or the aunties who changed my diapers. But, I can't talk to them about my life in Hawaii and expect them to understand, or vice versa. If I were to talk to Damon Fermantez from Hau'ula about the lives of my relatives in Utah, he wouldn't relate to anything. That doesn't bother me. I don't even know who my relatives are anyway!

Scott took me to Utah lake once and I saw my features clearly in the water. The water smells like a copper pipe and doesn't move. There aren't any 'Uhu or Veke there to chase with my three pronged spear. I don't like the way the water looked back at me. I missed the ripples and splashing water of the ocean that made my reflection seem more like the person I know.

SONNET WITH A VIEW: RICHARD III

Phillip Skeen

Now is the winter of my discontent
I am determined to prove a villain
Though elvished marked, rooting hog, hunch backed bent
I will deliver in haste mine evil plan
For no one can stand my ambitious heart
Under the blow of bloody homicide
Not mixed with words 'tis but rhetoric art
Conscious in soberness, my tracks I hide
Goodnight, vouchsafe, too hot to do so good
Oh no, he loves me and he holds me dear!
Hail! Hail! As Macbeth, yet truly a hood
A horse! A horse! My kingdom you may bear
So foul and fair a day I have not seen
Richmond has o'ercome, summer's quest, clean.



STREET SONG-SOULFUL BLUES

Jason Barrett

LANCE

Jim Walker

You left while we were away, along with Warren,
And so we still expect you at the door
On 4th Sundays with Josh or Zach or Dan,
Or even Ben (David had left before)—
Since once or twice you brought him
When others weren't around

You always came—certain as the prophet
Closing General Conference—
And what's more, you asked, inevitable as rain,
About each child. You knew them
And the gift of your concern

Warmed us amid uncertainties of departures
As did messages shared by strong sons
Accorded opportunities by a wise father—
A different kind of lesson, well-remembered.

Even stung by chemo's acid bite,
You insisted on meeting us at the airport
And sprinkled wit and banter on the drive home

As if it were nothing. As if you had won.
As if it were over—as if . . . as if . . .

The phone call darkened our day.

But who can forget you at the pulpit,

Warm, strong, open as the sky,

Determined to withstand, a model for us all.

Your wry smile reached out

Across far more than Sundays.

To this day, driving toward Kahuku

Up Kam Highway, I slow for a jogger with a stick

Trotting along the roadside, wondering,

Till he veers off an unfamiliar trail.



BRIGHT FUTURE

Martin Rosengreen

“YES!”

Daniel DeMartini

I always seemed to have my shirt on inside out—I wasn’t a sharp kid. My favorite foods were cheese, yogurt, and strawberries. I believe that friends are an important part of boyhood. I was the luckiest boy alive; all my friends lived in the backyard.

Glowing spring afternoons came and went in the shallow stagnant ditch behind my house. Run. Splash. Dive. “I got one!” I opened my clenched fist. A lump of mud lay beautifully in my palm. I felt the smile stretch across my face, splitting open the scabs in the corners of my mouth as the mud wiggled. The chocolate shell melted away to reveal smooth gleaming-black skin. The tadpole used haphazard snaky motions to slide across my hand. Eventually, the black teardrop dripped back into the water. Another swam by my leg. Run. Splash. Dive. I’d spend hours with the tadpoles. They actually prefer to be called polliwogs.

CJ didn’t have a slimy black tail, but I liked him anyway. “We can’t be friends. We’re already cousins.” That was our agreement. CJ’s satellite ears stretched out from the side of his head. “Dumbo Ears” is what Doug called him. That’s my brother. Doug. Doug was cool. His bangs always arced perfectly across his forehead like a flowing wave. No matter how hard I tried, my double cowlick made my hair poof up in the back like a warning-flare to signal accidents. He could peg his pants and sometimes if he was in a good mood, he’d peg mine, too.

Catching tadpoles was always a rougher game when CJ played. I secretly hoped that the polliwogs would be too fast for him. In the fury of the running and splashing, I’d sometimes squish one or two of my friends, but CJ killed every one. In a small pop all the guts would shoot through the skin, a little ball of black and white intestines coated with yellow mucus. I was thankful that my insides weren’t at the surface of my skin to be squirted out in pulses like chunky diarrhea.

Dad took a large pink plastic basin, sand, a rock, and twigs and fashioned a “polliwog pond.” His eyes gleamed and his smile opened the whole bottom half of his face every time we undertook an important project. We planted the pond by the rope swing in front. I added the water. Dad slapped his hands together in one stunning clap then rubbed his open hands so fast they blurred into one and made a swishing sound (that’s how he expresses excitement). Dad handed me a plastic bag and sent me off to the ditch. “Do your stuff.” Dad said if I took care of the polliwog pond, one day they would all grow into frogs and I’d have a frog pond. I believed him. The polliwogs did lose their tails and grew legs just like dad said, but the next day they all hopped away. I had thought polliwogs were different, but there I stood in front of the empty pond the same way I swayed in front of the creaking swing at recess—alone.

Dad, a pharmacist, knew every doctor in our town on a first name basis. The local dermatologist, “Dr. Shrooms,” gave me the diagnosis. “You’re allergic to milk,” he said after glancing over my chapped lips and the rashes on the inside of my elbows and behind my knees. Those itchy rashes had been there as long as my hands and feet. I exited the office through the freshly painted blue door and stepped into the cold concrete hall. Years later, Dr. Shrooms got busted for growing psychedelic mushrooms behind a locked door in his practice. We still patronized him after the prosecution; my Dad always said he was one of the smartest people in Nevada City.

I remember the first birthday party after Dr. Shrooms made his diagnosis. CJ was turning seven. It was a typical party; nothing strayed from the seven-year-old-party format. Mindless games: pin the tail on the donkey, musical chairs, relay races (the games mothers enjoy more than the participants). Then the pizza. I was served my pointed slice. I trapped my breath mid-throat and stared at down the greasy cheese; I began picking it off in loogie-sized clumps. I received strange looks. Delicately, I replaced the pepperoni onto the naked pizza. For the first time I heard the words that haunted every subsequent birthday party of my childhood, including my own, “I’m sorry, Danny. I forgot,” said the hostess. We sang “happy birthday” as a part of the birthday cake ritual. I couldn’t eat the ice cream. I was the first boy alive to realize

how dry cake tastes without it.

One time Colby's mom attempted compassion. She ordered half a pizza without cheese. And I had thought the cake was dry! I heard the pizza laughing at me as its crusted sauce mimicked the scabs on the backs of my legs. No one else came near the smoldering pizza carcass. Bound by manners, I ate it all. I felt like puking.

"You need to stop licking your lips," peers told me daily in school. "Your lips are still chapped?" my dentist asked at every semi-annual check-up "Don't those cold sores hurt?" Everyone acted as if my house had no mirrors. "Hey, moron! I don't want your stupid herpes!" my brother yelled when I drank from a container in the fridge.

I was lost in a perpetual state of limbo. "Danny your rash is breaking out; you've had milk, haven't you!?" my mother bellowed. Inversely, if the rashes happened to clear up, then I had been "good" around milk products. However, my actual consumed amount of dairy never changed. I'd always sneak a couple bites of ice cream.

When I was a freshman in Spanish class, Reannan Sharp sat four desks away. She was a sophomore, and the prettiest girl I'd ever seen. I never said a word to her. But, she spoke at me—once. "That is so disgusting!" The rashes on my legs and arms were particularly bad that year. Five years later I saw her again. This time at Chico State—I was still a freshman. The years had added to her beauty as well as an additional 30 pounds of beer-fat. I'm glad she didn't recognize me.

When I was seventeen, my dad made another appointment with Dr. Shrooms. My rashes and lips were bad. "That looks like atrophic dermatitis," he said. I think he had forgotten his previous diagnosis. He explained that atrophic dermatitis was just a term his doctor friends gave to the unknown.

The only medication that works is dexamethasone, a steroid. Unfortunately prolonged use will resurrect baby fat. Just the other day Doug saw my notes for this essay and asked in a disbelieving tone, "You were sensitive about that stuff?"



CASTLE

Rachel Hirschy

CALABERAS Y DIABLITOS

Jacob Jackson

Calaberas y diablitos bailaron feliz and
grainy black hair fell over Mariko's lips.

I had three in my mouth
and a half asleep notion of sweetness
followed by halloween streetlight rainbows,
orange and yellow lasting a blink,
and sheets of sprinkle.

Presently my arm is pinned under my body,
and pressed into hot velour couch cushions.
Mariko breathes warmth onto my other hand
and I kiss S.O.S into the heavens.
Little devils and skeletons still dance happy inside.
Los diablitos son mios, y no me meto con ellos.

calaberas: skulls

diablitos: little devils

feliz: happy

bailaron: danced

son mios: are mine

No me meto con ellos: I don't get in to it (argue) with them.



FIRE BREATHER

Ryan Alexander

ON THE EFFECTS OF AN IRISH TEA PARTY

Megan Peterson

The incessant sound of raindrops assailing the windowpanes was getting to me. At sixteen, I wasn't interested in catching a matinee of Disney's Tarzan and shopping for Easter dresses with my family, so I was left home alone. I'd played every computer game crowding my hard drive. I'd taken a drool-nap. I'd watched half of *Singing in the Rain* and all of *Ben Hur* and lost count of how many cucumber sandwiches I'd devoured, around five or six. The only thing left to do in my vacant house, aside from dealing with the mountain of dishes in the sink, was to rifle through the documents in my mother's filing cabinet.

Each file folder was meticulously marked. "Taxes 1994" (boring), "Taxes 1995" (boring), Taxes 1996" (boring), "Taxes 1997" (boring), "Taxes 1998" (boring), "Sarah Katherine Nixon Samson's Last Will and Testament" (bingo!). I had somehow stumbled onto the will of my Granma Sally who was still alive and healthy. As I leafed through the starchy document, I came across the passage everyone looks for: who gets what. "To my daughter Susan I bequeath all my remaining assets (approx. \$80,000 and miscellaneous personal items) aside from \$9,000, which I bequeath to my daughter Patricia. To my son Michael I bequeath the sum of \$1.00." I reread the passage a few times, trying hard to fight the laughter constricting my throat. Poor Uncle Michael, just a buck!

Granma didn't hate Michael; she wasn't vindictive. She was just hurt. After Uncle Michael joined the Navy, he wasn't seen or heard from for a long time—and it wasn't because he was MIA; he just didn't want anything to do with his family. Mom says that he ditched out because being with family caused emotion and Uncle Mike was afraid of feelings. I think he left because he could and he ended up liking it. I always speculated that maybe Michael left because he didn't like his

tough Irish mom, although I don't see how he couldn't. Gram was remarkable.

In 1919, my Granma was born in Cahir, Ireland. At seventeen, she ran away from a convent and boarded a steamer bound for New York. In America she met one of those tall-dark-and-handsomes, married him and birthed three babies, Patricia, Michael, and Susan (Sue). Patricia had one daughter, Shauna, who later changed her name to Miriam and disappeared into the recesses of some library doing research on the mating habits of West-African tree frogs and their effect on the apartheid. Michael ran away to the Navy to kill things and forget his feelings. Sue married Jack and had my five younger sisters and me. We were close with Gram.

Times with Granma were full of sunlight. One honeysuckle-scented afternoon, I sat in a mended lawn chair under the patio awning in Gram's backyard wearing a yellow gingham pinafore with lace that itched my chest. Mom was asleep in Grandpa's room just off the patio, so I had to be quiet because I was supposed to be napping too. Granma made chamomile tea. She gave me fossilized chocolate chip freezer-cookies the size of my balled fist for dipping in my tea until it was cool enough to drink. If the tea didn't cool quickly, she put two ice cubes in my cup; I watched them disappear as the steam swirling up from the tea condensed on my nose. Swinging my legs back and forth and snuggling my dirty toes through the fur of Granma's aging mutt, who waited underneath my chair for sugary crumbs, I felt important.

After our tea parties, Gram and I would walk. She and Grandpa had sheep. We brought leftovers and I fed the sheep through spaces in the fence, their black lips licking my chubby fingers. When we walked, we didn't talk; there was nothing for us to talk about. I could never get Gram to talk about her life in Ireland until I was much older. Back during our walking days, I was too young to care. With my grubby paw in her knobby, wrinkled hand, we walked the dusty roads past Grandpa's ripe cantaloupe patch enjoying the sun.

I can't remember a time when Gram wasn't wrinkly. Draped about her wiry five-foot frame, her gauzy skin folded endlessly over itself. She spent her life in America working outside. If a branch of the mistletoe tree was scratching on the roof, Gram got out the ladder,

scaled the roof with a chainsaw and hacked it off. If a sheep had problems giving birth, Gram pursued the bleating through the rocky fields and helped bring in a new lamb. Mom told stories of Gram working in the fields. When Gram worked alone, she took off her shirt and labored in her bra and work pants. If she heard a car coming down the bumpy, dirt road, she ran to the fence where her shirt hung, put it on and waved like a decent country wife as the car drove past. When the intruders were out of sight, Gram whipped off her top and got back to work. All those days outdoors weathered Gram's skin and made her hands splotchy.

Granma's strong hands turned shaky when her memory started to fail. She knew her kitchen with her eyes closed; so when she forgot how the appliances operated, my universe was thrown out of sync. Gram's cookies had been a constant. The gastronomic concoctions she created had been nothing less than acts of sheer prestidigitation. Her specialty was light, tangy, lemon-meringue pie; the recipe wasn't written, just held in Gram's fading memory. My mom, despite valiant efforts and petitions from my father, could never produce Gram's fluffy meringue. Granma's spaghetti was untouchable. The sauce wasn't red but ginger hued; it was chock-full of chunky tomatoes and always served in a bowl the color of burnt sienna. Gram's meatloaf wasn't a food; it was an event. Her meatloaf wasn't made for one meal; it got better each day. The leftovers, smothered in mustard and mayonnaise, always ended up as picnic sandwiches. After every meal at Gram's my dad pushed himself back from the table, stretched his long arms to the ceiling and moaned, "Well, Sal, you really outdid yourself this time." That proclamation has since become a family cliché.

One night at my house when I was seven, I was sobbing over a nasty casserole that my mom said I had to finish before leaving the table. Tears spotting my cheeks, I asked Gram if there were any foods she didn't like. Without hesitating she replied, "Potatoes." Potatoes? Who doesn't like potatoes? Squinting at the past, I never remember Gram making potatoes. That's all her family ate in Ireland and I guess she just got sick of it.

Gram didn't just cook from scratch. By buttering one side of the bread, adding lettuce and trickling mustard in the shape of a heart, Gram's bologna sandwiches made me forget about dessert. When my

sisters and I took turns spending the weekend at Granma's, she heated up frozen fish sticks with French fries for dinner and Karo syrup-drenched Eggo waffles with bacon for breakfast; the best part of which was the bacon accidentally touched by Karo syrup. While we waited for our waffles to toast and listened to bacon sizzle and pop in the microwave, Gram drank her coffee and gave me hot chocolate to sip. After I was through with the cocoa, she asked, "There, now is your tummy happy?" It always was.

She was the goddess of her kitchen; so I was bewildered when she forgot how to work the oven. One night before dinner, Gram called to me in the living room where I was lazing on the floor playing Legos. When I meandered into the kitchen, she pointed at the oven and asked, "How do you turn this thing on?" I got scared; I couldn't tell if she was kidding or not. I turned the dial to 350 and quietly went back to my toys. Later she forgot how to turn on the kitchen faucet. Then Gram quit cooking all together. I wish I had known when I was eating the last of Gram's chocolate chip cookies; I would have savored them more. When she stopped baking, all she ever bought were Oreos.

I stayed with her when she had a stroke. I'm not much bigger than she, but when Gram came home from the hospital, I could hoist her out of bed to dress and bathe her. When she was in the tub, shrunken with deflated breasts, I tried hard not to be affected by her lined nakedness. The bones that jutted from her translucent skin were crumbling with the osteoporosis I knew would plague me if I didn't take the calcium pills my mother was always shoving at me. Gram blushed at her shaking hands as I did my best to sponge down what was left of her.

When Granma was recovering from that stroke, I pushed religion. For all I knew, she had left God and Jesus back in Ireland, and so when she seemed so close to heading to heaven, I wanted her to find some faith. I kneeled by her bed and audibly prayed for her health. The words weren't important; the fact that I was praying aloud and she was too weak to object was significant. When I was through with my pleas to God, I asked Gram if she wanted to pray. I had never heard my granma pray in my entire life. She begged God to let her die. She was in pain. I knew that Gram was terrified of death; the fact that she was pleading to die told me she was suffering more than I realized.

After her recovery, she began to fall. Consistent stumbling caused her brittle bones to crack; when she finally broke a hip, the hordes of doctors whisking in and out of her hospital room told us she was on her way out. The inherent Irish stubbornness and subconscious fear of death kept my gram alive but defeated. Although she was repulsed by old-folk's homes, she had to be put in one with 24-hour care. For a short time she deteriorated in the sanitized chamber she was allotted. Then Mom and Patricia decided Gram needed intensified care.

She was eating when I walked into her barren room for the last time. The specks of breakfast littering her lips made her no less endearing, no less my granma. Even with the spots of orange juice on her familiar teal sweatshirt and her shaking hands, she was still the woman I had walked through the sheep fields when I was younger and whispered my crushes to when I was older. Before they took her away, and Gram didn't understand where she was being taken, I looked in her overcast eyes and promised I would write and call her. I never did. That time I embraced my gram goodbye I knew was my last. She died six months later never having heard from me again.

When I read Gram's will that rainy afternoon, she was still alive. She lived just a mile away. I never held her bitterness toward Michael against her. I never held a grudge against Michael either. Gram had to be mad at him for leaving; she was his mother. Michael had to leave; he was her son. How could I resent Michael? He wasn't the only one who failed Gram; I did too. After she left, I never wrote. I never called. I didn't want to think of Gram in any other world than that of my tea parties.

ODE TO PANAMANIAN MEDICINE

Luke Mease

sharp, hammering verde
los machetes bailando
rhythmic rise to fall to rise
hum, whistle, sway
la hierba cayendo
a dancing hand swung too low
her trusting partner reaching high

warm blood caresses dangling fingernails
the pitter-patter of red rain
mixes with spit and sweet sweat
churning with sticky, black mud
sketching an irregular perforation
tracing the long, green walk to the clinic
with dirty lights on a dirty floor

el mataburro asked me if it hurt
as the dirty, probing anesthesia needle
searched for an exit hole
from my middle finger
and my index danced
tripnerved upset unwilling

bailando- dancing
hierba cayendo- weeds falling
mataburro- Panamanian slang for doctor



STRETCH

Nathan Petty

SPARKLERS ANYTIME

Jason Barrett

Butter
smooth
On a short Stack

Like warm
gooey cookies off a sheet

u p n
j m i g on the trampoline
with the water on

Simple summer days

BREAKDOWN

Susie Ann Hoadley

Maggie Johnson was jolted from her groggy dream state when her husband Phil lugged his flabby frame off the bed. It rocked as he planted his feet on the tilting floor and stumbled towards the dirty bathroom. Lying there, peering at the ceiling with sleep-filled, half-closed eyes, Maggie saw the clock, only 6:23 am. She saw her husband's figure slouched over the toilet through the open bathroom door. Oh, Lord, It can't be morning yet. He left the toilet seat up again! And when did he get that little roll around his waist and that saggy belly? Maybe the beer. Heck, I'm not exactly a size six anymore anyways, like Shanna. Oh yeah, PTA meeting this morning and grocery shopping, and dang, I've got to clean again.

Maggie heard Phil singing in the shower, the water amplifying the screeching, the garbage man rumbling and banging down the block, and birds twittering outside the window. Instead of screaming "Shut up!," Maggie got out of bed. It was too early to even speak, let alone scream. With her feet on the soiled gray carpet, Maggie lumbered into the kitchen to put on a pot of coffee. Drip, Drip, Druppity drip the faucet sang, leaking in its singsong pattern, beating the steel like a drum. "Not again," Maggie said under her breath.

The air conditioning hummed. Maggie crept into her childrens' rooms. Jennifer, six, whimpered as Maggie's hand tapped her shoulder. The pink, lacey comforter moved with her breathing as she said, "Do I have to, Mommy?"

"Yes, sweetie. It's a beautiful morning and you have a field trip today, remember?"

"Just a minute. I'll get up in just a minute."

"No darling, c'mon. Up you go." Maggie pulled her not so gently out of her haven.

Brandon wasn't any easier. Her eight-year old crawled out of bed

and to the kitchen, where she was placing cereal, milk, and bowls on the table. The wood laminate sheet on top of the table was peeling and scratched. Maggie noticed this as she realized the laundry needed to be done, so the linen tablecloth could be placed on the old table, masking its imperfections. "If only I could do that," she said. She smiled.

"Awww, not cereal again," said Brandon. He plopped down on the cracked vinyl chair. "I'm sick of cornflakes. Why can't we get Cap'n Crunch?"

"Close your mouth and eat," Maggie said. She turned to check on Jennifer's progress.

He smirked. "I can't eat with my mouth closed."

"Brandon Lee" she said, stopping in her path. He shoveled in the food and she left. Phil rushed into the kitchen and opened the dishwasher to get a coffee cup.

"Phil, can you take a look at that sink? Its dripping is going to drive me batty," Maggie said. She put the coffeepot on the counter next to him.

"Well, you just told me about it. I'll see when I can get around to it, but you know how much I have to do today. Contracting isn't easy." He poured his coffee, splashing it onto his blue shirt.

Maggie grabbed the closest rag from the small towel drawer, turning the water on high. The icy water splashed onto her pajama top when she shoved the washrag into the path of the waterfall. She drummed her fingers on the sink before tossing him the dripping washrag. It slopped on the counter next to him. She hesitated, then said, "You know, I have a lot to do, too. I've somehow been put in control of not only my life, but three other peoples'."

"Don't get all defensive. I'll get around to it," he said. He reached to wrap his arms around her as he put the rag back into the sink. He leaned his head in to nuzzle her neck.

"Fine," said Maggie without turning, before he could get too close. "Aren't you late for work?"

Phil hurried out of the room. "I've, um, got to grab a different shirt," he muttered. Maggie looked at the alphabet fridge magnets before she finished puttering around. She imagined placing four letters side by side.

Finally, everyone was off to their respective destinations. Phil rushed out the door without a kiss. Her kids barely made it to the bus stop in time. Maggie leaned back in the worn floral recliner, eager for a few moments of her own. She clicked the remote, sending the light particles on the television screen dancing, and watched *The Price is Right*. Unfortunately, after only the second "Come on down!" she heard the jangle of the phone.

"Hello" Maggie said, craning her head around the kitchen corner to glimpse the show.

"Honey, I forgot the Schwartz house plans. Could you maybe bring them in to me? The meeting's in twenty-five minutes."

"Well, OK," she said, craning her head to see the show.

"Great. It's on the top of the nightstand, underneath my wood-working magazine and comb. Gotta run." Click. She sighed and thumbed the remote. "So much for some me time," she said.

By the time that errand was finished, the day was in full swing. Rushing to the school after waiting forever at the gas station, she parked and jumped out. Maggie speedwalked into the school, pausing only to wonder how children could possibly open such heavy glass doors, and passed the secretary's office, where the Rubenesque secretary sat chewing a jelly-filled donut, her eyes glazed.

Maggie opened the door of the conference room and tried to appear nonchalant as 21 pairs of eyes locked onto her. I hate being late, she thought. Every other person here probably has things under control. Her eyes scanned the room for the closest seat, which happened to be on the opposite side of the room. "Excuse me" she said when she tripped over the heels of Mrs. Johansen. Debra Johansen said nothing in response. The president, Shanna, gave her a look dirtier than her cat's litter box, and returned to the business of the meeting. She glanced down at her sandals, then at the feet of the others gathered around the imposing conference table. Only one other person didn't have heels on. How come she never got these memos? She sat silent, embarrassed, through the meeting. She was only asked for her opinion once, and then she was referred to as "Mr. Johnson's wife." Is that all I am? she thought. Leaving the room, Maggie felt a light tap on her shoulder. She turned slowly and saw Debra Johansen, in all her coiffed beauty, standing there. "Sorry about having my legs in the

aisle," Debra said with a soft smile. "I've just got to be more careful with these long legs of mine."

Maggie debated her response, knowing Debra was probably being sincere, but instead blurted, "No problem, a lot of witches have long legs." Mrs. Johansen stood in place, her lips moving, but no sound coming out. Maggie smiled and walked briskly out the heavy glass doors. She was happy to escape, even if it was only to buy the groceries.

Halfway through her purchase, she realized she had left her checkbook in the car and had to run outside and grab it. She rushed back into the store, rosy and panting. She smiled meekly at everyone, which just made their scowls darker. "I hate it when women don't have things under control like that," a line stander whispered. "They obviously don't realize how much they mess things up for the rest of us. I just have to be home before *As the World Turns* comes back on. Bo is going to kill Mary at the wedding of John and Samantha, humph!" a pepper haired woman responded not so quietly. Maggie breathed deeply and scribbled her name on the check. Before leaving the check-out she couldn't resist saying "Sorry I'm such a failure, you must have rubbed off on me" to the women in line. She breathed with relief when she finally got in the car to drive home.

All too soon she was home, and had to leave her little oasis with the country music and A/C. Reaching for her keys, she balanced one bag on her hip and one under her chin. The other bags remained in the car. Oh, no, not now! she thought, hearing the phone ring inside. She fumbled, opening the door with a jerk and dropping a bag on the floor. "Damn it!" She ran and grabbed the phone.

"Hello."

"Hello, this is Martha from Global Phone International. Are you the head of the household?"

She slammed the phone into the cradle. After the groceries were all put in their niches, the eggs and tomatoes mopped off the tile entry, and her sanity somewhat restored through a Symphony chocolate bar, the phone rang again. "It better not be another telemarketer," she said with clenched teeth. It was the play-group coordinator, asking her to host play group that weekend. Even better.

"Of course" she said, "No problem."

She started a batch of homemade cookies. When she opened the dark cherry cabinets and saw the organized, orderly pantry, everything in its proper place, she grinned. She glanced over to the counter, eyed the recipe and stuck her hand blindly inside to grab the flour. She felt something hard move from under her hand. In disgust she whipped her head around to the cabinet. Sure enough, there was a huge cockroach scurrying beyond her reach. By the time she grabbed a shoe, it was gone. "Rats!," she said. It echoed through the empty house. Measuring the ingredients made her feel in control, and adding new spices was interesting. She beat the dough with vigor, spraying splotches of cookie dough on the counter. Finally, the kitchen was clean, aroma filled the house, and dozens of cookies lay on a serving plate.

The front door opened and Brandon and Jennifer clambered through the door, dropping their schoolbags carelessly on the floor.

"Mom, mom, I'm STARVING! Can I have a cookie? Can I, Can I?"

She replied, "Just a minute. Why don't you go put your school stuff in your room? Then come talk to me about your day over a snack."

"Aw, Come on. Do I have to? Fine." They replied in unison, sighing. They grabbed their backpacks scowling and stalked into their rooms. In a few moments they were back in the kitchen, kicking each other under the table while they waited for the milk to be poured.

"Mommy, he kicked me," Jennifer said. She reached to pull on his ear.

"Now, that's enough," said Maggie. She set the milk down on the table a little too roughly. Milk slopped onto the soft, now soggy, oatmeal raisin cookies.

"Mother, now it's icky, gross!" said Brandon.

"Oh," she said, "Just the edge of one of the cookies got wet, it was too crispy anyway. Just eat it." Brandon gingerly tasted it, looking at his mother as if she had told him to eat his frog. After a minute, he shoved the rest of the cookie into his mouth. "See," she said, "It's fine."

"Hmm," said Brandon, licking his fingers. By the time Maggie had finished using the bathroom and washing her hands, they were sliding off their chairs to run and play.

"Wash your hands!" she called. They ignored her and ran to the backyard. Looking at the table, she realized she needed to get the rag from the sink and wipe it off. What a mess! She walked over and bent down to wipe up the crumbled cookie pieces and the spilled milk around both glasses, seeing her life reflected in the scattered crumbs. She could hear the laughter of her children deteriorating into an argument outside. The clock on the nearby microwave froze. 3:13, it blinked, 3:13. The ongoing drip rang through her ears as loud as a trumpet. The table was trashed, just like she was. The washer started thumping: Thump, Thump. The room spun. Cheery red curtains, messy table, dripping sink, cherry cabinets, and speckled robins egg formica blended into a mind-numbing rainbow. "No more, No more!" Maggie screamed as she tripped over her own feet, spinning around in confusion. She slowly crumpled.

The kids ran inside to see what was happening, "Mom, what's wrong? Mom?" Maggie was coming out of her foggy state, lying on the creamy linoleum next to the table. "I never got to use my French," she said looking absently at Brandon, "Parlez vous francais?" Brandon said "Jennifer, go get Old Mrs. Shobe, hurry!" Mrs. Shobe was outside planting geraniums and saw Jennifer run up. Jennifer said "Come quick, Mom's being funny!" Mrs. Shobe took the outstretched hand and stepped inside the house. She followed Jennifer to the kitchen. Maggie lay on the floor saying, "Le poisson et le fromage, il sont tres beaux." Mrs. Shobe stared. Maggie continued, "Oh la la! Le Siuge va a le tour Eiffel!" Then she suddenly switched to English and started quoting the *Animaniacs*. "We're tiny, we're toony, we're all a little loony!" Mrs. Shobe took one hard look at her and grabbed the phone. She called Phil, who was unavailable because he was delivering house plans to a new client, so she decided to call 911. The ambulance screeched to a halt in front of the driveway. The technicians jumped out and ran into the house. The two big men picked her up and carried her to the ambulance. She lay limp, mumbling. "The wee ones, they're the only ones to trust, and their hair is a-flaming. Oo, they have shamrocks, purty ones. That means I'm going to have me some luck." The EMT's in their gray suits rolled their eyes and said, "We've got a live one."

Jennifer and Brandon stayed at Mrs. Shobe's. They ate butter

cookies, played outside, and banged on the piano until Phil came home. "Is she okay?" he said, "I had no idea she was this upset."

"She'll be fine, I'm sure," said Mrs. Shobe. Phil called the hospital and found out that there could be no visitors until the next day. She was in the Psychiatric Ward for overnight observation.

"Come on kids. Lets go," Phil said. He threw a "thanks" over his shoulder as he crossed her lush green lawn. He stepped on a marigold as soon as the door was shut. "Oops," he said. "Be careful kids." They just looked at their dad and shook their heads.

"I wish Mom was back," they said walking behind Phil.

As the sun dawned on a new day, Maggie Johnson rolled over and opened her eyes slowly. The only sounds were small beeps and muffled conversation. The crisp cotton sheets slid softly on her skin. She stretched. What a luxury to have a bed to herself. "What a wonderful place," she thought. Just then the nurse came in with a hot breakfast tray and round pill. The nurse straightened the blankets at Maggie's feet.

"It's a lovely morning, and you have just one more test today, Maggie. You're a real trooper," she said and patted Maggie's arm.

"That's fine."

"Are you up to visitors, doll?"

Maggie said, "Not yet. Thanks."

"No problem," said the nurse.

After sitting up to enjoy a breakfast she hadn't made, Maggie lay back. A smile spread over her face as she enjoyed the order, peace, quiet, cleanliness, and kindness everywhere around her. Maggie glanced at the clock. Nine a.m. She turned on *The Price is Right* and enjoyed an uninterrupted hour before clicking it off. Maggie closed her eyes and savored the silence. "This is the life," she said quietly. "This is the life."

ON THE PATIO

Megan Peterson

A tea party in the sunlight Deliciously sweet, hard, frost bitten cookies
Condensation gets your hands moist Dipping cookies in the liquid
That looks like dirty water

Mother is napping

My pinafore is yellow And white seersucker With a ruffle

The chamomile tastes like outdoors Like tasting Joy of swinging near
the honeysuckle fence

As strong as you are You're wrinkled

Letting the dog eat the crumbs That fall from my freezer-cookies

그림이 없는 말이
아름다운데다中
天에서 호수
은니먼서 티야光
明하느니 빛
미디디니

이제이제이제

아름다운



KOREAN CALLIGRAPHY

Oh Eun Young

CHUMWEIGH'S SPECIAL SAUCE

Ben Eliason

"We have experienced a tragedy here on campus, something that has rocked us to the core. Our hearts go out to the friends and family of the beloved student who so abruptly disappeared. It is heartrending to think of this young flower, so ready to bloom. We must unite ourselves in a spirit of fasting and prayer, imploring the Lord for her safe return. Still, at this moment, little more can be done. The authorities are searching every inch of this beloved isle for our vanished friend. The most important thing for us now is to look beyond this horrid incident and to concentrate on life ahead of us."

Executive Administrator Chumweigh's voice reverberated condolences through the high rafters of the Cannon Activity Center like a padded pinball bouncing off the sides of a double point bonus square.

"Do you know what I heard?" whispered English Professor Briden Landerstrom to the teacher next to him. "I heard she washed up on Bikini Beach fully clothed, hardly a scratch on her, but with no internal organs. It's like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, you know that 1956 film directed by Don Siegel, where the aliens came and made giant pod looking things that grew new people who later took over the other ones. Man, that was a quality movie. Anyway, what in the world could do that?"

"Nothing could do that. You need to stop listening to stupid rumors," replied Briden's companion.

"I don't listen to rumors and you know it," Briden shot back.

"Oh of course you do. Do I need to remind you of the whole La Brea Tar Pits incident?"

"I thought you said you would never bring that up again. You said you wouldn't ever mention it."

"Well, do you, Briden? She's just lost, and that's all there is to it."

"Whatever you say," replied Briden with more than a hint of sarcasm.

"We mourn, but at the same time remember and keep faith in a glorious future. Amen." Chumweigh returned to his seat and sat down, his back resting against his padded chair like a feather nestling into a pillow.

"Well, I'm going to get some lunch. I'm starving."

Briden Landerstrom made his way out and proceeded towards the Seaside. It was a warm summer day with an onshore breeze whispering through the palm fronds. Clouds were forming offshore, making their way towards the seaside community of Laie. They would arrive soon and drench the campus like a St. Bernard falling off a high dive. But for now, life was sweet and spirits were high. Briden pressed the handicap button and the Seaside doors creaked open. He sauntered towards the counter.

"Double scoop of strawberry cheesecake and watermelon sorbet. Better put that in a waffle cone."

"You're looking hungry, Brother Landerstrom," said the worker with a smile.

"I'm famished. As the great T.S. Eliot once wrote:

Buried beneath some snow-deep Alps.

Over buttered scones and crumpets

Weeping, weeping multitudes

Droop in a hundred A.B.C.'s

"I don't think I get it Brother Landerstrom," said the young scooper.

"Yes, well, you should read up on that. Thanks for the ice cream."

Briden exited the Seaside and commenced to stroll around campus, thinking of the wonder of life and living. The wind caressed his brown locks, and a cloud cast a shadow over his face. He continued walking over a strip of grass, licking his cone.

This is a little like that scene in *Lawrence of Arabia*, the 1962 film that David Lean directed, where Lawrence walks through the sand and contemplates how to capture the city of Aqaba, he thought. "The cinematography in that flick was stunning. What a quality film," Briden mumbled absent-mindedly as he jostled through the post-devotional crowd, drawing more than a few inquisitive glances.

Suddenly Briden stopped like a Pinto slamming into a heavy brick wall, only without the mangled wreckage, throbbing headache, and recurring neck pains that always accompany such an event. He

heard voices around the corner, familiar voices, yet there was something amiss with them. He listened intently, straining his ears to understand. It was the beloved Executive Administrator Chumweigh.

"The mother ship will arrive shortly. The colonization will proceed in a matter of hours. All has been prepared perfectly. The virus will spread from MCK 101 and then engulf the entire campus. We will begin to land troops by nightfall."

"Excellent work, Executive Administrator, or Grand Intergalactic Chancellor, if I dare presume. I'm sure you will be appointed to the position after your thunderous success here. Not only will you take over the world, but you also had a few championship volleyball and tennis teams. Not too shabby." The voice was a woman's unlike anyone Briden had ever heard. The only thing he could compare it to was that of the Emperor in the movie *Return of the Jedi*, the 1983 film directed by Richard Marquand. The lighting in that movie was exceptional. Quality work for sure.

"You're too kind," replied Executive Administrator Chumweigh. "Do you really think so?"

"Oh of course! Who else could it be? You know how Gardon botched up that whole Terrion 5 over take. You're the only reasonable choice."

"I hope so," replied Chumweigh. "I hear the cook there at the chancellor's home is exceptional."

"Speaking of which," continued the woman, "how did that girl taste, the one that washed up this morning?"

"Oh, the snooper? She was delish. I do wish I had had some Tabasco sauce to go along with the spleen though. You know how incredibly scrumptious that is."

"I've never tried it actually, but I've heard only good things."

"Oh they're all true. I was actually a little glad she happened upon our secret meeting. I was feeling ever so hungry at the time."

"Yes, and no one suspected anything about your little 'Donner Party?'"

"Not a thing. All is going perfectly. As long as no one cuts the mauve wire in MCK 101 within the next fifteen minutes, the virus will be released and Earth will be ours. If anyone does cut that wire, the electric shock will kill him or her instantly. They may stop the virus, but they will still kick the bucket. Once all the humans here on

campus are dead, we shall have a feast like no other."

"Shall we be off then, Executive Administrator."

"Quite, quite. Let's go for a little stroll."

Briden sank to his knees in anguish as he contemplated the horrors he had just heard. His throat turned into a sand dune, and he began coughing up the small sand-like particles suddenly appearing in his trachea. The only thoughts he could entertain were the words of Coleridge, in his "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

And now there came both mist and snow,

And it grew wondrous cold:

And ice, mast-high, came floating by,

As green as emerald.

What could he do, a poor English teacher, to stop Earth's demise? I must go and cut the wires in MCK 101 he thought, but to do so will precipitate my own death. I feel like Montgomery Wick in the Martin Campbell film *Vertical Limit*, when he cuts the rope and falls to his death, all to save the lives of others. What an awful movie that was. If people would just stop patronizing such films, producers would make more quality movies, and we wouldn't have such junk on the market. If I have one goal in this life, it is to eradicate movies like that, but right now I must cut the wire and save the world. How convenient that Chumweigh mentioned exactly what I need to do to stop the virus. It's kind of like all those stupid movies where the bad guy tells the good guy exactly what his plans are right before he's going to kill him. How ironic. Would that make me the good guy? I've never really thought of myself as a good guy in that respect. I mean I'm a nice fellow and all, but that's not what I mean. A hero type? Well, I suppose. I don't see why not. Addison Walker once said, "It's not true that nice guys finish last. Nice guys are winners before the game even starts." Maybe that's true, but I still haven't cut that wire, so who knows? Just being the good guy won't cut the wire. I wish Chumweigh hadn't mentioned the electrocution part. That really adds to the tension in this situation, but anyhow, time to save the world.

With those extremely lengthy and laborious thoughts, Briden stole quickly away to his beloved classroom. He tried to walk calmly, but his heart was beating like the drum in the Tongan Village, pounded mercilessly by a Japanese tourist. The adrenaline gushed through his body, raising his hair on end and making his lips quiver. Reaching

the classroom, he opened the door and entered. "If I were going to take over the world, and all my plans depended on no one cutting this wire, I think I would have locked the door," Briden mused.

No time for that now. Now was a time for action. He reached for his trusty Swiss army knife, extracted it from his pocket, and opened the blade, all the while searching for this mauve wire he had to cut. Suddenly he saw it, there in the middle of the room away from everything else, a small apparatus with a series of purplish wires extending to the ceiling. Briden advanced towards it, his heart racing like a pinewood derby car, and examined the wires that protruded from the curious box.

"They're all purple!" he exclaimed. "All the wires are purple!"

This was not entirely accurate. Although Briden, like any other normal humanoid male, couldn't tell the difference, the wires were actually violet, lavender, mauve, lilac, plum, wine, and amethyst. But, as mentioned before, Briden, like any other normal humanoid male, saw only purple.

"What do I do? Which wire do I cut?"

His mind was an engine, pumping through thoughts and ideas until it reached a poem by John Keats.

GLORY and loveliness have passed away;
For if we wander out in early morn,
No wreathed incense do we see upborne
Into the east, to meet the smiling day

He wasn't quite sure what that had to do with anything or why Keats was slipping into his mind at a time like this, but he didn't have time to worry about that now. Now it was time to pick the right wire and cut. He grabbed a wire, placed the knife behind it, closed his eyes, and was about make the fateful slice when he felt a warmish tingle in his back. He turned and saw Executive Administrator Chumweigh standing by the doorway, holding a small pistol-like device exuding a greenish glow. The tingling grew inside Briden until he slumped onto the floor and lay motionless.

"Typical. Just typical," rang out Chumweigh's annoyed voice. "Another snooper, and me without my Tabasco sauce."



THE OTHER SIDE

Andrea Hess

MY FATHER'S SCAR

Sienna Palmer

The stairs are broken up into two sections with a little landing in between. The top section has a tall banister that overlooks the bottom flight of stairs. I am playing there on the top, on the banister. Sliding down it or something. I am four. My father has just turned the corner at the landing and is climbing down. I can only see the top of his head. His head seems tan (maybe it's the lighting). It is definitely bald though. Skin bald, something about the brain tumors and trying to remove them. The vivid part of the scene is the scar. The simple, unassuming and undramatic way it's just there. It's fairly big and very visible to my little eyes. It is just there, a three sided square on the top of his head. A real three sided square scar on the top of my father's bald head as he walks down the stairs.

I can't remember very much from that period of my life. What I do remember, I always think I must have made up. Did he even have a scar like that? Why only three sides? Why no emotional attachment to my father, only the scar? Did I dream it? It never left me though.

I am in the second grade, maybe seven. Everyone in class is working on their math. It's kind of hard (adding multiple digits), and I am doing the same stuff as everyone else, not ahead like some of my friends. Some of them are even learning to multiply. I might be ahead, except that lady comes and gets me during math. She is big, fatter than most people I know, older too, but very nice. Her hair is kind of gray, and she wears a dress. When I see her in the doorway, I put my math book away, and we walk together to her office. It is small and filled with games. We talk, but mostly play games. Checkers and stuff. I don't think my mom knows I come here. When my friends ask me why I leave during math, I can't think of a reason. Later, I think maybe it had to do with the scar.

I am twelve, maybe. We are writing autobiographies in class. Lots of essays about ourselves. I write a lot, one about my mom, about gymnastics, a funny day I had, what I want to be when I grow up and a short one about my dad (I can't remember exactly what I wrote, something about him having black hair, blue eyes and a mustache). I type them all up carefully, put them in plastic sleeves and arrange them in a new blue folder. I spend that night cutting out magazine letters to spell "inconceivable" on the cover. That's my title. It's from *The Princess Bride*. My dad had read the book to my older brothers at bed time. I have only seen the movie. In class we leave our folders on our desks and walk around to different seats and read different essays in each other's folders. The teacher has us fill out these evaluations. When I get mine back most kids had read the one called, "My Father." They say stuff like "very touching" and "emotional." A few just make an arrow to the comment of a fellow classmate and write, "same." I guess they agree or can't think of anything new to say. I feel the same way.

What else is there to say? I was four. What if I made the scar up?

I am sixteen. I am sitting in the bishop's office after church. He asks me how I am. "Fine." I guess. The conversation moves quickly to the spiritual. How's my testimony? "Fine." I guess. I have played it out in my mind. The way it works. The way that knowing that I can see my father again makes me want to work infinitely harder. It makes me want to work harder to make it to where he is, with God. I don't even get to the part about how I want to know him, not like a four year old on the banister, but like me, now. I start to cry. I hate it when I start to cry. Like the bishop even cares. Like he cares that I can't even talk about a man I don't remember. He just sits there across the desk from me with that mustache and comforting smile. I am finally able to conclude through my actual tears and harder, the frustration of my tears. As I walk home I try to remember more, more of my own memories. Not just the stories and the pictures my mom has shown me. More that I remember. I keep coming back to the scar.

THE SMALL GOOSE PAGODA

Jesse Palmer

From the tips of leaves
twilight drops and splashes
into the shadows,

seeps in the cracks
of bricks in the long empty path.
Mosses practice greeness.

Grass waves curl deeply
light like mist, wafting over
the black earth.

Timid, tired smoke
the dusty souls of withered leaves
exhaled mingles.

The trees do tai-chi,
branches flow, intercepting
sky, forming the light.

Filtered glory
a rose colored expanse with
fading yellow edges.

Only the birds weave
through the emptiness between
branches, where leaves were,

carving the stillness

tearing the silence, with cries
of laughter and longing.

Climbing up through the
regenerating tower's
dark hollow heart, bricks

melted together
by the pale sun, which deflates
on obscured mountains.

The iron bell sleeps
coolness reveberates, hums
with memories of sound.

The light falls, flutters
released piece by piece, like leaves.
A fire hisses alive.



PURPLE FLOWER

Ellie Christensen

Sp. 10.10.13
Moven 1

